

PURBECK COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP MEETING 29

HELD VIRTUALLY VIA TEAMS
ON 11 FEBRUARY 2025



In person:

Cllr Beryl Ezzard (BE) of Dorset Council (Chair), Mick Stone (MS) of Swanage Railway (Secretary), Frank Roberts of Swanage Railway (FR), Steven Booth (SB) PCRP Community Rail Officer, Cllr Cliff Sutton of Swanage Town Council (CS), Kelly Flynn of Dorset Council (KF), Mike Whitwam (MW/m) representing Swanage Town Council (Vice Chair), Andrew Ardley of SWR (AA).

The meeting was quorate.

Agenda Item 1 - Chair's Opening Remarks, Welcome and Introductions

BE welcomed all to the meeting. There was no need for introductions as all were known to each other.

Agenda Item 2 - Apologies for Absence

Received from Jenni Jones of CRN (JJ), Paula Aldridge of SWR (PA), Ali Rodari (AR) and Rob Smith (RS) of Perenco UK, Jaime Rockhill (JR) of Network Rail, Alex Brocklesby (AB) of National Trust, and Jack Wharton (JW) of Network Rail.

Agenda Item 3 - Draft Minutes of the Steering Group meeting of 12th November 2024

The minutes were agreed.

Agenda Item 4 - Matters Arising Therefrom and Not Appearing on the Agenda

The outstanding Actions from the November meeting were reviewed. Most of these had been dealt with, but the following still needed action:

- Restore Your Railway Bid Status - AA advised that he would raising this issue later in the agenda;
- Response from DC to SR's letter of January 2024. None in attendance had seen this letter, which would have been sent to the Cabinet member for Transport at that time, Cllr Bryan. However, KF advised that she understood that there would shortly be an internal meeting at DC to discuss the matter;
- AA advised that the date for the opening ceremony at Dorchester South had now had to be put back to April. He would confirm a date in due course **ACTION: AA.**

Agenda Item 5 - Financial Update

SB had sent round the latest financial information (end of January) as part of his report (see next item). The main headlines were that there was approximately £40k in the Account, and a list of project bids which had been submitted since the last meeting. Chief amongst these latter was the bid to CCIF for funding for the Purbeck Shuttle 200 project. It was understood that the necessity for DfT approval for successful schemes would mean that the Partnership wouldn't know the outcome until around the end of April. BE was concerned about the impact of this on preparations for running the service.

Agenda Item 6 - CRPO's Report & Updates

SB had circulated his report. The main points arising were:

- the progress of works at Dorchester South (Planting, Murals, Parklet for Beryl Bikes, and the digital posterboard and Totem). The prospect for artwork in the new waiting shelters was next on the list of works to brighten the station.
- At Wareham, the proposal for new planters over the area around the foot crossing was still being developed, with a planned installation date of May. BE mentioned the proposal for a Railway 200 and Wareham 178 celebration, and thought the provision of some seating would be beneficial.

- At Wool, the new information board was due to be installed on 18 February. It was not clear who the owner of the land was, but apparently not NR or DC. This had been funded via the SWR Social Development Fund. A plaque was to be installed to commemorate the Tank Loading Ramp.
- The application to Western Gateway for funding for a Rural Mobility Pilot scheme had been unsuccessful. The application had been made jointly with NT, PTAG, and DC. All were disappointed to hear this news. KF thought that her colleague, Debbie Fiddik, could help to explain why the bid had not been successful. **ACTION: SB.**
- Purbeck Shuttle 200 - this was an agenda item later.
- SR was holding a Community Weekend later in February at which the Partnership would be represented.

Agenda Item 7 - Purbeck Shuttle 200

BE reported that:

- Discussions with other parties locally had been undertaken to ask for contributions to funding of this proposal ie in addition to the bid to the SWR CCIF mentioned earlier.
- The thinking was to try to operate the service on 4 or 5 days per week, from the end of May to September. Because of the decision-making timescale for CCIF, it was probable that a reduced initial service would operate at the outset.
- Offer of help from a Wareham St Martin's councilor would be considered **ACTION: SB.**

Agenda Item 8 - Purbeck Shuttle 200

Dorset Council:

- BE reported that the Council would be considering its budget for 2025/26 at a Council meeting later that day. It was clear that funds were 'tight'. It was hoped that funding for Dorset's CRPs would be in the budget. **ACTION: SB and KF to discuss application.**
- BE wanted to make clear that funding announced by DC for Dorset Metro scheme was in respect of a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) only. Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) was getting underway. It was important that PCRPs made its views known.

Swanage Town Council:

- CS had to leave at this point but reported that the Station Approach works at Swanage were underway.

Friends of Wareham Railway Station:

- BE thanked Paula at SWR for the daffodils and tulips. She was concerned about the restricted opening hours resulting from staffing issues, and the anti-social outcomes thereof.

Network Rail:

- No report was available.

Perenco UK:

- It was understood that there was contact between Perenco and DC regarding the sidings lease/sub-lease.

Swanage Railway:

- FER reported on the improving financial position for SR but urged caution for the future. Auditors had been impressed by the progress.
- The first CEO for SR would be starting in mid-March. Special events were coming in 2025, led by the Commercial Director, Alex Atkins. SR was working on plans for 2026/27.

- The Governance Review was progressing, with a Project Manager in place to take it forward. A Stakeholder Day was planned for 11th April. FER did not know if the joint ticketing with Coastal Cruises in 2025 had been finalised **ACTION: FER to advise.**
- Stations In Bloom would be led by SWR in 2025. Paul Clements was the SR representative. **ACTION: SB to contact Paul Clements.**
- Bridge 9 (Grange Road) - repair works were underway following the bridge strike, with a hoped-for completion date of early May. Until then no through trains could operate to/from Swanage.
- In response to AA's advice about the forthcoming economic analysis, FER asked if PCRCP could assist with a formal consultation, seeking local residents' comments on the sort of service they would wish to see. **ACTION: all to comment.**
- FER referred to recent discussions between SR and Dorset Council regarding Purbeck Park and specifically the kiosk there.

CRN:

- Nothing further to report.

Agenda Item 9 - Any Other Business

- SB advised of the need to change the date of the next (Hybrid) Steering Group, which was currently planned for 6th May (Post Meeting Note: now moved to 13th May) **ACTION: all to note.**

Date of Next Meetings:

- (Hybrid) Steering Group - 13th May 2025 (probably at Wareham Youth Centre).

ENDS

MS – V2 - 24/02/25

Steven Booth
Purbeck Community Rail Officer
steve.booth@purbeckcrp.org.uk
Tel: 07485 372137

